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# Report of Committee on Camden Paupers and Poor Farm From 1880 to May 15, 1890

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**REPORT**  
OF  
**COMMITTEE**  
ON  
Camden Paupers and Poor Farm

From 1880 to May 15th, 1890.

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CAMDEN,  
CAMDEN HERALD PRINT.  
1890.

*To the Town of Camden—*

The committee appointed “to investigate the past affairs of the Town Farm, and everything pertaining to the town poor, and to print and circulate their report as soon as possible,” submit the following as the result of their investigation:—

TOWN'S POOR SINCE 1880.

The subjoined table gives a statement of the numbers, expenses, etc., of the paupers of the town since 1880. If carefully studied it will tell what effect the farm has had on that part of the town's expenses. The figures were taken from the selectmen's and treasurer's and auditor's accounts, and the accounts of Mr. Henderson, and if the figures for the last three years are conflicting, and do not agree with the auditor's report, and in any way reflect on those having charge of the farm, it is the lack of proper accounts by the selectmen with the farm. For the past three years their accounts do not show any items of what has been sold from the farm during those years, nor do the auditor's reports show those items. It seems to have occurred from a mistaken idea by the selectmen of their control of the farm, or lack of interest in it.

Since the subjoined table was made up we find additional bills not in the auditor's report, as follows:—

Rockport Ice Co.,	\$95 00
Simonton & Gill,	25 73
J. F. Clifford,	4 53
Carleton, Pascal & Co.,	14 87
C. A. Carleton,	1 98
	<hr/>
	\$142 11

These increase the expense of the poor by that amount. Why these bills were not included in the auditor's report is not apparent to the committee, and we pass no comment on it. We would, however, suggest that all bills against the town be included in the annual report.

There is nothing in the town books to properly show what disposition was made of the money for produce sold as shown



by the auditor's report during those three years. For instance, the auditor's report, March, 1890, shows total amount received from the farm, \$568.50, which is deducted from what they call the gross cost of running the farm, \$1,055.97, leaving net cost of running farm, \$487.47, when, as a matter of fact, we should add to the gross cost, \$1,055.97; \$177.21 supplies paid by Mr. Henderson in cash (not in produce as by auditor's report) and \$568.50 received from farm which is claimed to have been consumed on the farm, making total gross cost of running the farm \$1,801.68, to which add the interest on the investment, \$240, making a grand total \$2,041.68, as against \$1,233.18 as appears by the auditor's report.

#### AGREEMENT.

The differences in the accounts between the Town of Camden and A. W. Henderson, for his services and expenditures as agent of the Poor Farm of said Camden, for the years ending April 15th, 1888, 1889 and 1890, are hereby submitted by the selectmen of said Town and said Henderson to the arbitration and award of J. H. Montgomery, H. L. Shepherd and J. W. Thorndike, and their finding and award is to be final and binding upon both parties, and settlement is to be made in accordance therewith and proper vouchers and receipts are to be executed and passed between the parties to make the same binding and effectual.

D. A. CAMPBELL, } *Selectmen*  
E. ORBETON, } *of Camden.*

A. W. HENDERSON,  
*Agent of Camden Poor Farm.*

April 15th, 1890.

The undersigned, referees named in the forgoing submission, having met the parties thereto at the Poor Farm in Camden and having on the 15th day of April, A. D. 1890, fully heard them and their respective witnesses and examined their several accounts and vouchers, find and award as follows:—

The Town of Camden, for the year ending April 15, 1888, is indebted to said Henderson for the balance due him for services on the farm and expenditures for supplies, (conceded to be correct by the selectmen, no account having been kept by them,) \$48 27

For the year ending April 15, 1889, for the like services and similar expenditures as shown by his

books, (no account having been kept by the selectmen,)	\$315 21
For the year ending April 15, 1890, for the like services and similar expenditures as by his books, (no account having been kept by the selectmen,)	\$61 09
Total due Henderson April 15, 1890,	\$424 57
From the amount by agreement of Mr. Henderson we deduct four weeks care and board of Captain Ryder (Henderson's father-in-law) at the farm and estimate the same at four dollars per week,	\$16 00
We also find Mr. Henderson purchased a pung of John C. Thorndike for \$28.00 and charged the town \$30.00 for it, but as the selectmen objected to the purchase and refused to accept it, we find the pung to be worth not more than \$15.00 and he had no authority to buy it, and so deduct it from the balance due him,	\$30 00
Also two cords of wood sold not appearing in his acct.,	\$10 00
	\$56 00
Making the balance due Henderson,	\$368 54
And this sum we award him and direct the same to be paid to him by the town and that he execute a receipt to the town for same.	

J. H. MONTGOMERY, }  
H. L. SHEPHERD, } *Referees.*  
J. W. THORNDIKE, }

In submitting this award the committee report that during these three years the selectmen have allowed the man on the farm to trade and traffic with the produce and stock of the farm without rendering to the town any itemized account of his transactions. So that the committee are unable to report, from any accounts kept by Henderson or the selectmen, the net income of the farm for those years.

Such license to the man on the farm gives opportunities for similar dealings as the case of the pung, to buy for one price and charge the town a larger price, or to pay double the value for many articles.

We find, during those years, a great assumption of authority by Mr. Henderson in relation to his duties and control of the farm, and a yielding to that on the part of the selectmen more



than, as officers, they had a right to yield. The selectmen are overseers of the farm and it is their duty to require, at least once a month, a particular statement of the things needed on the farm and to order them and require and have proper vouchers for all expenditures.

The man on the farm is the hired servant of the town and it is his duty to care for the poor on the farm, and to care for the farm and cultivate it with what assistance the town, through the selectmen, furnishes him. This is as it should be as the selectmen are responsible to the town.

And that is the manner the farm was run prior to 1887, and with good results, as the books of the selectmen and treasurer show. Since that time we have only the books of Mr. Henderson. They do not show for what things produce from the farm have been exchanged, nor what quantity. They show his expenditures for sums yearly amounting to \$600 or more, and no vouchers.

The whole management of the farm, for the past three years has been so doubtful, and the records and accounts in relation to it so meager, that the committee unhesitatingly recommend such change as will give the town complete knowledge of what is done. And the committee would further recommend that, immediately after the annual town meeting, an inventory of all stock and everything belonging to the farm at that time be made as a basis for the auditor's report at the end of the year, and that a correct account of everything raised on, brought to or produced by the farm and stock be kept during the year. For instance, a butter account, a hen account, a potato account, swine, stock, &c., account, so that it may be known just what it costs to run the farm, and just what it pays. In that way it may be definitely ascertained what it costs to support the poor on the farm.

Two examples will illustrate the need of keeping accurate books. For the past year a horse has been kept on the farm, owned by Mr. Henderson, but nothing in the accounts of the town shows what it cost to board the horse. It could not have cost less than \$75.00. Also the selectmen have visited the farm often, but nothing in the accounts shows what it has cost the farm for their services. Leaving out a lot of such items makes the auditor's report look small but they have to be paid and they constitute the expense of keeping the poor.

## POOR FARM.

We find the farm consists of 190 acres of which about thirty-five acres are tillage. The balance is pasturage, except about eleven acres of woodland which is well wooded. The pastures have sufficient wood growing in them to supply the place with firewood. The pastures and woodland contain about 600 cords of wood, much of which is good for timber. The tillage land is the very best for farming purposes. It now cuts about 30 tons of hay and could with proper farming be made to cut 60 tons. There is a large orchard of apple trees on the place but we find them, while thrifty, needing trimming, pruning and cultivating. This would require two weeks' work and we recommend it to be done.

## BUILDINGS.

The buildings consist of a main house and two ells and contain 16 rooms. The cellar is a very good one but needs draining. The house and ells are in fair condition, except the sills and bottom. This part of the building will have to be made new very soon. The sheds connecting the house and barn need leveling up, shingling and repairing. The water closets are bad and should be cleaned and made new at once. The buildings need painting, but the repairs should be made first. The buildings are heated by a wood furnace, which we think not only very expensive, but in its construction and the way it connects with the various rooms, liable to set fire to the house and dangerous to the occupants of the house. There were eight paupers on the place who, to all appearances, were well cared for. One of them has since died. We think all paupers of the town should be carried to the farm. There is room and comfort for them on the farm and plenty to do if they are able to work. An exception should be made of a person temporarily unfortunate, but the farm should be used as far as possible for what it is intended. This paying out so much when there is plenty of room there is not consistent with the objects of the farm. And until this can be reduced to the first way of keeping the poor, we shall never know what it costs per year to keep the poor.

There is much difference of opinion as to carrying on the farm. It is a large farm and if properly handled requires a great amount of work on it. If it cannot be farmed properly it is no good to the town. If any of its resources are neglected it



is so much a loss. That its resources are neglected is evident when it should yield 60 tons of hay and only 30 tons are obtained, and where it might pasture 40 head of cattle and only 18 are pastured, and all its other resources in the same proportion. No practical farmer who is able, cultivates his land in that way. A poor man may have an excuse for not improving all the resources of his farm, but if he be intelligent and industrious he will every year approach nearer to it. And the town should every year improve on the farm or abandon the idea of farming it.

But every board of selectmen are not practical farmers and after a careful examination the committee report that they find the resources of the farm not thoroughly improved, nor such progress as will lead up to it, and they consequently think the town has more farm than it has any need of. The town should take into consideration an arrangement to let the farm to a responsible person, he to have a certain amount paid him and the use of the farm for a term of years, and to furnish all the paupers of the town proper support, he giving a bond for a faithful performance of his duties towards the poor and the cultivation of the farm, or the employment of an agent for that purpose with like guaranties for a term of years.

#### BARN.

Until last year there were on the farm two old barns, one 30x70 ft. and one 30x48 ft. with shed attached 11x36 ft. At the annual meeting last year \$300 was raised to repair or build barns on the farm. On this vote the selectmen concluded to take down the old barns and build a new one, using the materials in the old to construct the new. The new barn sits on the site of the smaller old barn and is 40x60 ft. and cost \$757.59 in cash and the materials taken from the old barns, and we judge the materials from the old barns furnished about two-thirds of what was required in the new barn, and as the new materials in the barn cost \$300, the old was worth certainly as much, which, if added to the amount paid, will make the cost of new barn \$1,057.59 against \$681.59, as appears by the auditor's report. So that the bills on the barn as reported to us stand as follows:

Amount expended by Mr. Orbeton,	\$681 59
Amount expended by Mr. Henderson,	76 00
Amount of old barns,	300 00

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\$1,057 59



The barn now needs a cellar under it and a wall on three sides. It now sits on abutments which the frost will probably affect in a few years.

There has been much controversy over this barn. Mr. Henderson claims that the \$300 raised by the town would have put the old barns in good shape for many years, and they would have answered the requirements of the farm as they had done in the past, and that taking them down and building the new barn was too expensive for the town for the benefits received.

On this matter the committee say, the thing has been done and we have the results whether they be the best or worse for the town. But we would suggest that hereafter, when such extensive changes in the town's business is intended, the town have a chance to say before it is begun what shall be done. For example, the condition of the old barn should have been reported and the repairs needed, to the town and an estimation of the cost of the repairs; also a plan for a new barn and its cost of construction. And the town should have had a chance to say which should be done. Had this course been taken probably a different result would have been obtained and more satisfactory to the town.

The barn when accepted by the selectmen was simply a shell. It had no floors laid, no partitions, no tie-ups, no scaffolds and no underpinning. The amount expended by Mr. Henderson was to finish the barn in this respect, and his bill was for labor alone, not counting his own time. And this work was done by him when his time should have been employed in farming.

The result of the controversy over the building of the barn and the general management of the farm between the selectmen and the man on the farm has cost the town during the last three years a large amount that might have been saved had proper business relations existed between the selectmen and the man on the farm.

We hope we have sufficiently defined the duties of the selectmen and the man on the farm so there will be no mistakes in that respect hereafter.

J. H. MONTGOMERY, }  
H. L. SHEPHERD, } Committee.  
J. W. THORNDIKE, }

Camden, May 7, 1890.

	1880	1881	1882					
No. of persons supported and assisted by town for 3 years prior to purchase of poor farm.	52	63	60					
Expense of support of poor 3 years prior to purchase of poor farm.	5,481.04	4,907.98	4,976.93					
	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890
No. of persons not on farm aided by town since purchase of farm.	45	28	26	23	40	43	42	50
Expense for each year on farm.	4,169.31	1,728.60	1,616.26	1,183.67	1,708.76	1,688.02	2,399.29	2,282.72
Expense for each year on farm.	212.04	859.13	861.89	877.16	624.70	1,339.64	1,689.90	1,791.68
Expense of running farm as per auditor's report.						695.04	319.10	487.47
Actual expense as found by committee.						1,569.64	1,929.90	2,041.68
Total expense on and off farm, per year.	4,381.35	2,587.73	2,478.16	2,060.73	2,333.47	3,087.66	4,088.19	4,075.30
Am't rec'd from stock, produce, &c., sold from farm and paid to town treasurer by selectmen.	39.60	108.20	193.07	602.00	489.31			
Am't rec'd from stock, produce, &c., sold from farm and not paid to treasurer.						634.00	634.90	568.50
No. of persons on farm for above years.	Not given in aud. report.	14	15	15	16	Not given in aud. report.	Not given in aud. rep. rt.	Not given in aud. report.